

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

INTRODUCED BY JACOBSON, MUSGROVE, D. BROWN, COONEY, CALLAHAN

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO DEVELOP, CONSOLIDATE, AND UPDATE FIRE-RELATED STATUTES IN ORDER TO IMPROVE WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION AND MITIGATION AND TO ADDRESS DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS ARISING FROM DROUGHT AND FOREST FUELS, AS WELL AS THE COMPLICATIONS AND COSTS OF FIGHTING FIRES IN WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACES.

WHEREAS, wildfires impose a large recurrent financial, human resources, and natural resources cost on Montana; and

WHEREAS, Montana state agencies, as well as national and regional studies, commonly point to the high risk of wildfire posed by fuel accumulation; and

WHEREAS, movement into the wildland/urban interface has increased both the risk to inhabitants and the cost of fire suppression; and

WHEREAS, there is considerable sentiment among knowledgeable officials that Montana statutes are outdated or even silent on these important issues; and

WHEREAS, study is needed not only of these fire hazards but also of Montana's statutory response to these hazards, the use of local resources, and the funding of wildland fire protection and suppression costs; and

WHEREAS, a strong relationship between the federal, state, and local agencies is necessary, and the need to study their interrelationships and clarify how to enhance them is important.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to develop, consolidate, and update fire-related statutes, in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, wildland fire service organizations, and any other organizations, to address dangerous environmental conditions and areas of wildland/urban interface, to improve wildland fire suppression and mitigation, and to recommend legislation to

1 appropriately fund wildland fire protection and suppression costs.

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
3 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
5 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2006.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
7 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 60th Legislature.

8 - END -